

Meeting the Toddler Car Seat Challenge

1-year-olds, 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds . . .

Keeping them safe and happy

**Child
Safety
Facts
2005**

Car seats (child safety seats) for kids over age 1

Use a car seat facing the rear of your vehicle until your child is age 1 or even older, staying within the rear-facing weight and height limits of the seat. Babies who weigh less than 20 pounds at age 1 should continue to ride rear-facing until they reach 20 pounds or more.

There are two kinds of forward-facing car seats for toddlers 20 to 40 pounds. A few have a harness for use by children above 40 pounds (check label). This kind is good for toddlers who are heavier than most.

- 1) **Convertible car seat (A):** faces the rear or the front of the car.
- 2) **Forward-facing car seat (B):** Many combine a harness for a child under 40 pounds with a booster seat for a child over that weight. A child seat built into the back seat of a vehicle is also a good choice.

The “best” car seat for your toddler:

- fits your child’s weight and height with room to grow
- can be installed tightly in your vehicle—try before buying
- has a harness that is easy to buckle and adjust correctly

Beware of second-hand car seats. They may have hidden safety problems, missing parts, no instructions. If one has been used in a crash, it should be thrown out, not used again.

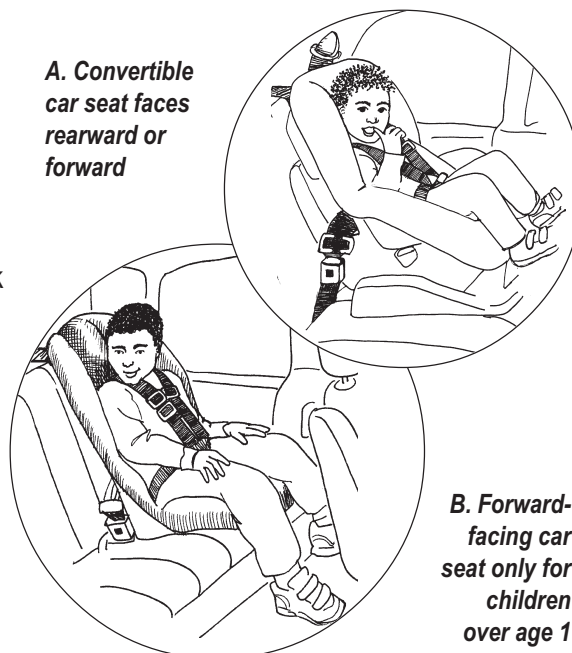
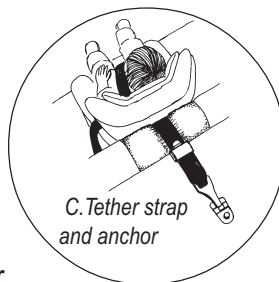
Over 40 pounds? Seat belts are not enough!

Most kids do not fit well in most seat belts until at least age 8. If your car has lap-shoulder belts in the back seat, use a booster seat or car seat with a weight limit above 40 pounds.

If your car has no shoulder belts in the back seat, get a car seat with a higher weight limit or a safety vest or harness. You may be able to install a shoulder belt to use with a booster. (See back for product list and information on shoulder belt kits.)

Install your child’s car seat correctly

- **Check the vehicle manual** for tips on installing the car seat.
- **Put your toddler in the back seat** if possible. **Never** put a rear-facing child in front with an air bag unless it has been turned off. If a forward-facing child must ride in front, slide the vehicle seat all the way back and make sure the harness is snug. If the airbag has a turn-off switch, turn it off when your child rides in front.
- **Fasten it tightly to the vehicle** with the seat belt or LATCH attachments. Press down on the car seat while you tighten the belt or straps. The child’s seat should not move more than one inch forward or side to side. Use LATCH attachments on a car seat if you have a vehicle with LATCH anchors (see owner’s manual).
- **Hook the tether strap (C)** to a tether anchor. If your vehicle doesn’t have anchors, call your dealer for parts and installation.



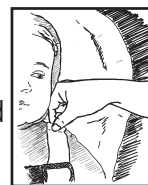
A. Convertible car seat faces rearward or forward

B. Forward-facing car seat only for children over age 1

Use your car seat correctly

- **Always follow the instructions.**
- **Put harness straps in the correct slots.** For most convertible seats, use the highest slots. For seats that only face forward, straps should be in the slots at or just above the shoulders.

- **Adjust the harness to be snug.** Tighten the harness so slack cannot be pinched at the shoulder (D). Your child should not be able to lean forward. Slide the harness clip up to armpit level.



D. Pinch test

- **Keep your child in a seat with a harness as long as possible.** The straps hold a child in place if she is wiggly or falls asleep in the car.
- **Your child has outgrown the car seat when:** Ears are above car seat back; or shoulders are above top harness slots; or weight is above the maximum allowed.

*Make
Every Ride
A Safe Ride*



Surviving the Car Seat Struggles

Keeping control with a toddler in the car

The toddler years can test your patience as a parent. Children from age 1 to 4 are learning new skills and feeling more independent. It is normal for young children to:

- test your limits by trying to do what they want
- learn how to undo buckles and wiggle out of straps
- be bored easily and try to escape

It can be hard to cope with a child's difficult behavior in a moving vehicle. There is no "escape-proof" car seat, but here are some ideas to help both of you win.

■ **Insist that your toddler must ride in his car seat on every trip** with no exceptions. If you let him ride unbuckled once, he will want to get out again and again. This is a test, so be firm and stay calm. Remember that you buckle him up to keep him from getting hurt. Make sure that all others who transport your child also know how to keep him buckled up on every trip.

■ **Use positive rewards.** Give your child praise and hugs when he rides quietly and stays in his seat. Tell your child that you know it can be hard to stay seated but everybody rides buckled up. By age three, a child can begin to understand that if he unbuckles, he could get hurt in a crash. Let him buckle in his favorite teddy or doll if there is an extra seat belt. Stop often on long trips to stretch and run around.

■ **Keep your child entertained.** If she fights being put into her car seat, distract her with talk or a toy. You'll get her buckled up before she knows it! Bring along the special things that comfort her, like a blanket, doll, or stuffed animal. Keep a bag of small picture books and soft toys for use only in the car. Avoid sharp toys, pencils, or lollipops.

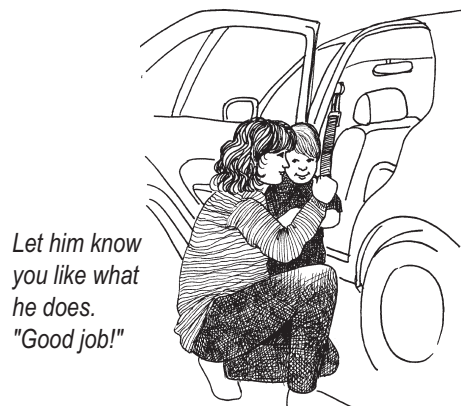
Talk with your child about things that she can see out the window. Point out trucks, buses, tall buildings, signs, traffic lights, and other interesting sights. Play favorite music and story tapes or sing children's songs with her. Choose tapes you both like.

■ **Be a role model.** Kids learn by example. Always use your seat belt. Make sure everyone in the car (grandparents, friends, and older children) buckles up also. Unbuckled passengers can be thrown around inside the vehicle during a crash and hurt other people in the vehicle.

■ **Use the parent-tested "Stop the Car" method!** Stop the car if a young passenger doesn't follow your rules. If your toddler gets out of her car seat or yells and screams too loudly, find a safe place to stop the car. Be firm and stay calm. Explain that **the car will not go** until she is buckled up. This may be inconvenient, but usually works after only a few stops.



Keeping toddlers buckled up can be one of the toughest challenges for parents.



Let him know you like what he does.
"Good job!"



A book or a special soft toy will help keep her happy in the car.

Resources

National Highway Traffic Safety Admin.,
888-DASH-2-DOT, www.nhtsa.dot.gov
SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A., 800-745-SAFE,
www.carseat.org (includes list of
shoulder belt kits)

Finding a local car seat inspection station:
866-SEAT-CHECK, www.seatcheck.org

Car seats/harnesses for kids over 40 pounds

For a product listing, go to
www.saferidenews.com;
or visit these individual manufacturer web sites to
locate a product:
www.britaxusa.com, www.combi-intl.com,
www.ezonpro.com, www.safetrafficsystem.com,
www.safety1st.com